

SSA *Slovak Studies Association*

SSA NEWSLETTER WINTER 2020-21



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The SSA in 2020 and the First Quarter of 2021

A Note from Daniel E. Miller, President of the SSA

Despite the challenges of 2020, the SSA, with its 66 members, had quite an active year.

One of the most noticeable achievements of 2020 was the creation of a new website, thanks to the efforts of Marty Manor Mullins, who, in April 2019, volunteered to serve as the SSA webmaster. Throughout much of 2019 and 2020, both she and Andrew Tonjum, one of her students at Flathead Valley Community College, in Kalispell, MT, built a completely new site, using WordPress. If you have not explored <https://slovakstudies.org/>, I encourage you to do so. There are blog posts, past newsletters, individual bios of members, interviews, and more. Under the "Membership" tab, is a form for new members, and there are PayPal buttons for paying dues, which is a great convenience for members outside of the United States. I am certain that you will find the new website both informative and attractive. While you are there, take a look at the new SSA logo. On another technical front, Marty Mullins also arranged for the SSA to stay in touch with its members through Mailchimp.

A crucial initiative of the SSA is its sponsorship of the Czech and Slovak Studies Workshop (CSSW), a yearly conference that Jindřich Toman, of the University of Michigan, began, in 2000, as the Czech Studies Workshop. In April 2018, the first workshop to receive funding from the SSA, took place at Columbia University, and it marked the name change from the Czech Studies Workshop to the Czech and Slovak Studies Workshop. The second CSSW to receive SSA funding was in April 2019, at the University of Texas at Austin. The third was to be at the University of Pittsburgh, in March 2020, but days before its start, the organizers had to cancel it because of the COVID pandemic. Fortunately, the University of Pittsburgh agreed to hold this year's event virtually, and it took place on 18-21 March 2021. Marcela Micháľková, the director of the Slovak Studies Program at the University of Pittsburgh, and her associates assembled a rich program that unfolded flawlessly on the Internet. There were a number of papers on Slovak issues and a keynote address by Pavol Demeš, a senior fellow at the German Marshall Fund of the United States. On the evening of 19 March, the Very Reverend Mitred Archpriest Marek Visnovsky spoke about icons, and Donald G. Warhola, the vice president of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and the liaison for Pittsburgh's Andy Warhol Museum, considered the influence of icons on Andy Warhol, Donald Warhola's uncle. The SSA contributed \$250 to the 2020 CSSW, which went toward the 2021 event, and the University of Pittsburgh covered the bulk of the cost. Other sponsors of the 2021 CSSW included the Czechoslovak Studies Association (CSA). Both Carla Huebner, who is president of the CSA, and I served on the program committee for the cancelled 2020 and the successful 2021 CSSA.

The 2020 business meeting of the SSA took place virtually, on 6 November, during the annual convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES), which took place on line. An important outcome of the meeting will be a change in the *SSA Newsletter*, beginning with the next edition, as the position of editor shifts from Carol Skalnik Leff, who also serves as secretary-treasurer, to Mark Stolarik. In the future, be sure to send any news items and articles to stolarik@uottawa.ca.

During the ASEES meetings in both 2019 (San Francisco, CA) and 2020 (on line), the SSA sponsored panels. Thanks to the efforts of Carol Leff, the SSA will sponsor another at the 2021 convention that will take place, from 18 to 21 November, in New Orleans, LA.

In 2020, there was no award for the best graduate paper, but the Awards Committee, which consists of Susan M. Mikula (Benedictine College, in Lisle, IL), M. Mark Stolarik (University of Ottawa, in Ottawa, Canada), and Edward Snajdr (John J. College of Criminal Justice, in New York, NY), who serves as chair, will be accepting nominations for the best published article in Slovak studies. The committee will present the award at SSA business meeting during the 2021 ASEES convention, which will be in New Orleans, LA.

In January 2021, the SSA board voted to add the SSA to the signers of the "Ransacking Democracy" statement of the American Historical Association (AHA), the main organization for historians in the United States, that condemned the 6 January 2021 storming of Congress, in Washington, DC. The SSA secretary-treasurer communicated with the director of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES), and influenced the ASEES to add its name to the statement. All together, 62 associations appended their names to the document, which condemns "inflammatory rhetoric of all the political leaders who have refused to accept the legitimacy of the results of the 2020 election and thereby incited the mob." The statement is available at [https://www.historians.org/news-and-advocacy/aha-advocacy/ransacking-democracy-statement-\(january-2021\)](https://www.historians.org/news-and-advocacy/aha-advocacy/ransacking-democracy-statement-(january-2021)). (Editors note: this included multi-disciplinary organizations like ours and the Hungarian Studies Association, organizations sensitized to democracy threats).

Finally, let me take the opportunity to wish you the best for the remainder of 2021.

SLOVAK STUDIES ASSOCIATION ELECTIONS



This is an election year for SSA and we have the following elective offices: President, Vice President, Secretary and officers at large. The treasurer and newsletter editor and our webmaster are not elective for logistical reasons although they too may be consulted as an executive board between annual meetings. We will be presenting a slate later in the year, and if anyone is interested in holding office, please contact President Dan Miller or me as Secretary. (our contact information at the end of the newsletter on p. 25).

Also on the ballot will be some simple changes to the SSA by-laws. For example, our bylaws still refer to our parent organization as AAASS and there is also no explicit mention of use of electronic media for communication.

Elections will be held in the fall, and we expect to be using a survey instrument for privacy, while reserving the option of mail-in ballots.

SLOVAK STUDIES ASSOCIATION BEST ARTICLE PRIZE: CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

At its annual meeting during the ASEES conference, the Slovak Studies Association will award a prize for the best article or book chapter about Slovakia in the humanities and social sciences published in 2018 or later. All submissions must be in English, but they can be published anywhere in the world. The publication's author or authors are to be members in good standing of the SSA (to join, contact secretary-treasurer Carol Skalnik Leff, leffc@illinois.edu. First-year membership is free, as is all graduate student membership.)

The deadline for e-receipt of submissions is July 1st 2021. Send entries and any questions to Professor Edward Snajdr, Prize Committee Chair, at esnajdr@jjay.cuny.edu

The SSA Awards Committee consists of Susan Mikula (Benedictine University), M. Mark Stolarik (University of Ottawa), and Edward Snajdr (City University of New York).

Remembering Father Gerald Sabo, S.J.

This remembrance of our past SSA president, founding member and friend to many long-time members appeared on the website of John Carroll University, where he taught for so many years. <https://jcu.edu/news-center/remembering-father-gerald-sabo-sj>

One of our own members is preparing an appreciation of his life and service which we hope to have published in the next edition of the newsletter.



(Gerry in the classroom—you can just see his computer screen)

Father Gerald Sabo, S.J., beloved member of the Jesuit community and Associate Professor of Slavic Languages and Literature, passed away suddenly on October 24, 2020. He was 75.

Father Sabo spent forty years teaching Slovak, Russian, and Eastern European Literature at JCU. A native of Connecticut, he joined the New England Province of the Society of Jesus in 1969 and was ordained a priest in 1980. He celebrated his 50th anniversary as a Jesuit last year.

He was an alumnus of Fairfield Prep and Fairfield University, both Jesuit institutions in Connecticut. He studied Theology at Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Massachusetts, now part of Boston College. He also earned a doctorate in Eastern

European Languages at Yale, but modestly played down his Yale connection preferring to be called “Father” over “Doctor.”

Father Sabo transferred to the Midwest Province and joined our faculty in 1981. He was the last Jesuit at Schell House to have moved from Rodman Hall in 1997 and served as rector of Jesuit Community from 2007-2013. At the time of his death, he was working on a magisterial history of Slovak Literature.

In an interview, Fr. Sabo explained the reason for his move to JCU, "I was very interested in teaching at John Carroll because it was a Jesuit school and was located in an area where there was a significant Slovak population, my ethnic background and part of my graduate Slavic languages and literatures specialization. I got my wish and came to John Carroll in August, 1981, and as they say, 'the rest is history.'"

He loved John Carroll and was a fiercely loyal friend and devoted teacher. He knew generations of alumni and was always glad to hear from former students and parents.

Father Sabo was president of the Slovak Studies Association when I (newsletter editor Carol Skalnik Leff) first joined and I already had an appreciation of the scholarship and humanity of Jesuit priests (I taught as an ABD at Holy Cross) but Jerry had by far the best wry sense of humor! Thanks to Rate my professor, I can validate that. Here's what his students had to say:

“Seriously, take a class with Fr. Sabo. He's the best. He's so hilarious and is also really helpful.”

“I loved Fr. Sabo. He is super dry and sarcastic”

‘He's a great guy and a great professor. He seems tough but he's really not and cares about students a lot.’

“Father Sabo is AWESOME!!! This course focused more on verb conjugation and cases (Nominative, Accustive, Locative, etc). Not much new vocab and he still goes at a great pace. I'm going to miss this class...”

“Father Sabo was both an amazing man and an amazing professor. He was clear and concise in what he expected from the class or assignments. He had a sense of humor and was very caring. He knew the material very well and could explain it even better. R.I.P. Father Sabo; it's too bad more students couldn't learn from you.”

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ZOOM-AGE TALKS AND OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES SPOTLIGHT ON THE SLOVAK AMERICAN SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON DC

One silver lining to the covid pandemic is the availability of international and local talks on Slovak issues from the comfort of your home. **Feel free to post on our Facebook page or contact the newsletter editor to suggest useful on-line experiences, including your own forthcoming presentations.** This time I particularly would like to encourage you to engage with the Slovak American Society of Washington DC (<https://dcslovaks.org/>). This group has a decades of sponsoring in-person talks of both academic and broader cultural interest, long before the covid era, and rapidly adapted to taking them to zoom. Consider joining to learn about and access the talks live, but they are also often (but not always) available later on their youtube channel.

Now available on the DC Slovak Youtube channel:

"The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library in 2021" (presentations by the NCSLML staff including SSA member **Dave Muhlena**) on YouTube:
<https://youtu.be/uaSUnjKLaC4>

"The Great Return: How Reverse Migration Is Transforming Slovakia in the 21st Century" (Dr. Zuzana Palovič, Global Slovakia) on YouTube:
<https://youtu.be/c1GBELjL5HE>

"Zelení Nahlas: Environmentalism in Slovakia in the Revolution and After" (SSA member **Ed Snajdr** based on his book, *Nature Protests: The End of Ecology in Slovakia* (Washington University Press) available on YouTube at the following link: <https://youtu.be/D9fktSLLyr8>

Not yet available, but coming soon to a youtube venue near you:

SSA members Kevin Deegan-Krause and Tim Haughton a zoom talk on their book "***The New Party Challenge in Slovakia: Understanding and Dealing with Constant Political Change***"

The talk covered the tumultuous history of changes in Slovak parties over the decades since 1989. SSA members in the audience (not to mention Kevin and Tim themselves) included Susan Mikula, Helen Fedor, Michael Kopanic, James Krapfl, Marty Manor Mullins, Carol Skalnik Leff.

Watch out for their Slovak party system T-shirt which will be available on Etsy soon. Proceeds go to support Roma education.

Coming up next for the SASW series is a talk on June 10th at 7:30 EDT by documentary film-maker Robert "Bob" Glowacky ***Bringing Back Bodrik: A Traditional Solution to a Modern Problem*** about the Slovak čuvač dog.

Glowacky explains:

Bringing Back Bodrik is about the Slovak Čuvač, a livestock guard dog in the Tatra Mountains. The dogs have guarded the mountains for centuries, but the traditional techniques of keeping the čuvač have been forgotten by the shepherds. Predators, once pushed out hunting and habitat loss, are now making a comeback. Attacks on livestock are becoming more frequent and many methods of defense are failing. If Shepherds are to protect their sheep, they must look to the past for answers.

To register for this event on the Zoom platform, please visit:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYpcuyogjstHNB-WDGorjPQIMspPv6ugV7r>

CALL FOR PAPERS, ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

Ján Golian of the Catholic University in Ružomberok invites contributions of articles and reviews in English to the journal ***Kulturné dejiny*** (Cultural History). Information at jan.golian@ku.sk

Mark Stolarik at the University of Ottawa reminds members that the annual scholarly journal ***Slovakia*** always welcomes article submissions. Anyone with a suitable article submission can send it electronically to **M. Mark Stolarik, Editor, Slovakia:** stolarik@uottawa.ca

CONFERENCE CALL FOR PAPERS ON POST-WWII MIGRATION FLOWS (NOT ONLY) IN THE PROPAGANDA STUDIES CONTEXT

Partners of the Visegrad Grant's project Post-WWII Migration Flows in the V4 States in the Context of Propaganda Studies invite you to a conference in Kosice January 21, 2022. SSA member **Leslie Waters** is one of the keynote speakers.

Disciplinary areas could include, but not limited to, cultural history, media studies,

- Migration Studies
- Cultural History
- Borderland Studies
- Legal issues of Migration History
- Media Studies
- Propaganda Studies
- Applied History
- International Relations Studies
- Central European Studies
- Ethical issues in migration

Registration is free, but if you wish to apply to make a presentation, the deadline for applications is October 15 2021. For more information you can contact the conference organizers at: E-mail: heldakova@saske.sk or visit the facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/PostwarMigrationFlowsInTheV4States>

Plan is for an in-person conference, but depending on conditions, part or all of the conference may be on line.

Czechoslovak Studies Association book prize Eligible submissions can be from all academic disciplines, provided that the English-language books are published in 2019 or 2020 by a single author and have a significant historical component. One must be a member of CSA when the book is submitted. Books should be submitted in hard copy to the book review committee by June 25 at the following addresses.

Prof. Mark Cornwall 60 Northlands Road Southampton SO152LH UK
Prof. Cathleen Giustino 1203 Hickory Lane Auburn, AL 36830 U.S.A.
Prof. James Krapfl 21326 Hwy. 136 Cascade, IA 52033 U.S.A.

James Krapfl, the new editor of *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue canadienne des slavistes* invites article submissions and book reviews. Contact him at James Krapfl, Editor, *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue canadienne des slavistes* Dept. of History | McGill University | 855, rue Sherbrooke O. | Montréal (Québec) H3A 2T7 | Canada. Information by email at james.krapfl@mcgill.ca

David Muhlana, Library Director at the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library in Cedar Rapids Iowa writes: The overarching theme for our upcoming issue of **Slovo** is the Czech and Slovak artistic and political response to oppression from without and from within, starting from the mid-19th century through the current day. We are interested to receive contributions from scholars of Czech and Slovak studies. This issue is somewhat tied to an upcoming exhibit, Artists as Activists. Note that “artistic” is not just the visual arts but also the creative arts (including language, literature, theater, poetry, music); and political is not strictly politics but those long-term efforts to advance the freedom and identity of all Czechs and Slovaks. Those themes are compelling but a little fuzzy, so we are open to suggestions for possible topics. Word length can be between 1,000-1,500 words, depending upon the topic. And we are fine with repurposing content that has already been produced. Note: Slovo is received by the NCSML’s members; the writing style is similar to what you find in *Smithsonian Magazine*, so less academic but still rigorous. Deadline would be after Thanksgiving (still working on a drop dead date). Let me know if you have questions or need clarifications. **Contact** dmuhlana@NCSML.org

Twentieth Annual Czech and Slovak Studies Workshop

Remember this opportunity occurs annually: We will announce by member email and Facebook details about next year



The Twentieth Annual Czech and Slovak Studies Workshop was held virtually at the University of Pittsburgh on March 18-21, 2021, coordinated by Professor Marcela Micháľková and others at the university michalkova@pitt.edu.

Included was an afternoon of panels on Slovak language:

SLOVAKIA: LANGUAGE AND DIALECTS I

1:30 p.m. (EDT) Alexander Maxwell, Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand
Ludovít Štúr's Pan Slav Grammar, Or, Why a Nárečje Is Really a Dialect After All

2:10 p.m. (EDT) Katka Showers-Curtis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA
The Proximity Effect in Slovak Dialect Perceptions

2:50 p.m. (EDT) **COFFEE BREAK**

SLOVAKIA: LANGUAGE AND DIALECTS II

3:10 p.m. (EDT) Miroslava Gavurová, University of Prešov, Slovak Republic
Dialects in Eastern Slovakia in the Era of Globalization from the Perspective of Long-Tail Languages Theory

3:50 p.m. (EDT) Soňa Rešovská, University of Prešov, Slovak Republic
Dictionary of Slovak Neologisms (Lexicographic, Lexicological and Comparative Slavic Research) - Neological Research at the University of Prešov

SSA member **Charles Sabatos** also presented (see also his member news).

BRIEFLY NOTED

The **National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library** in Cedar Rapids has reopened and is featuring an exhibit entitled *Treasures of Slovakia: One Thousand Years of History*, that runs in the Petrik Gallery from September 2021-March 2022. This is accompanied an exhibit of Slovak headdresses from the Baine-Cincebeaux collection.

Description: Rare and significant artifacts will be on loan from the Slovak National Museum in Bratislava; many which have never left the country before. This newly-curated exhibition will share Slovakia's treasures in four parts: history, art, folk life, and nature, with each topic developed and supplemented by Slovak National Museum resources.

For other current and future exhibits, see <https://www.ncsml.org/>

From Mary Heimann, Professor of Modern History at Cardiff University has a request for information: I'd like to ask about devotional materials. What sorts of objects, if any, were smuggled, how and when? heimannm@cardiff.ac.uk

Publication of Milan Rastislav Štefánik: The Slovak National Hero and Co-Founder of Czechoslovakia

Michal Kšiňan, historian at the Institute of History, Slovak Academy of Sciences recently published the first English scientific biography of the Slovak national hero and co-founder of Czechoslovakia, Milan R.

Štefánik. <https://www.routledge.com/Milan-Rastislav-Stefanik-The-Slovak-National-Hero-and-Co-Founder-of-Czechoslovakia/Ksinan/p/book/9780367550059> Summary:

This is the first scientific biography of Milan Rastislav Štefánik (1880–1919) that is focused on analysing the process of how he became the Slovak national hero. Although he is relatively unknown internationally, his contemporaries compared him “to Choderlos de Laclos for the use of military tactics in love affairs, to Lawrence of Arabia for vision, to Bonaparte for ambition ... and to one of apostles for conviction”. He played the key role in founding an independent Czechoslovakia in 1918 through his relentless worldwide travels during the First World War in order to create the Czechoslovak Army: he visited Serbia and Romania on the eve of invasion by the Central Powers, Russia before the February revolution, the United States after it declared war on Germany, Italy dealing with the consequences of defeat in the Caporetto battle, and again when Russia plunged into Civil War. Several historical methods are used to analyse the aforementioned central research question of this biography such as social capital to explain his rise in French society, the charismatic leader to understand how he convinced and won over a relatively large number of people; more traditional political, military, and diplomatic history to show his contribution to the founding of Czechoslovakia, and memory studies to analyse his extraordinary popularity in Slovakia. See also his Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/Michal-K%C5%A1i%C5%88an-%C5%A0tef%C3%A1niks-Biography-101160458720119>
https://twitter.com/ksinan_s

THE MULTIPLE POLITICAL UNIVERSES OF SLOVAK POLITICS

Please indulge me as I pass the torch back to Mark Stolarik as newsletter editor, with some thoughts on Slovak politics.

Tim and Kevin's recent book and two panels we did with others last winter on recent Slovak politics caused me to think about the way in which every country has a set of slightly different if overlapping political universes. For example, the people who vote in US primaries are a different set than those who vote in off-year/midterm congressional elections and yet again different from presidential election year voters...all of these different in composition and turnout...and results!

So I have some thoughts about Slovak politics in this regard. Slovaks vote in consequential elections all the time at multiple levels: European Parliament, Presidency, Slovak National Council and Regional elections. But owing to the electoral systems, turnout and the stakes, the profile of the Slovak people looks different and sometimes puzzling, and even contradictory. Normally we focus quite understandably on the parliamentary elections that produce the governments, but here just some thoughts about the rest of the political universe. Especially worthy is Tim and Kevin's focus on new parties (and my own fascination, the disappearance of a Hungarian minority party in parliament for the first time since 1990.)

European Union elections

Here's a definite puzzle. Slovaks consistently report reliable support for the European Union. And the youngest generation is most emphatic of all (that is not unusual throughout Europe, incidentally, but Slovaks in the 18-34 age bracket are a full 26 percentage points more enthusiastic than the older Slovak cohorts)

<https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/10/14/the-european-union/>

And yet, ever since joining the EU, Slovak turnout in those elections has been embarrassingly low; by country, it is always last, and not really close. Oľga Gyárfášová and Karen Henderson have grappled with this puzzle and concluded that it is not due to multiple election fatigue. Nor does it seem to be distinctive in other respects such as knowledgeability about the EU. Instead they describe a passive attitude to the EU and lack of clear differentiation among the political parties on the EU question. (If you do not have access to the journal *East European Politics* in which their article appeared, try Researchgate for "Slovakia and the Turnout Conundrum", *East European Politics* 34:1 January 2018, pp. 1-20) Another interesting thing about this political universe is that Slovak voters have not generally used these "second-order" elections to punish parties in power and vent by giving massive protest votes to radical parties; this kind of punitive voting is more common elsewhere in Europe. As an American contrast, think about the way the party of the incumbent US president is consistently punished in off-year elections. But although Kotleba's far-right party did quite well in 2019, that only scored 2 of Slovakia's 14 MEP seats.

Presidential Elections

Then there is the presidential political universe. West European countries historically have had unelected or very weak presidents, with the notable exception of France (blame de Gaulle for that?). In post-communist Europe, the presidential elections are more often directly elected in a French two-round model and are somewhat more consequential, especially symbolically. There was a time when all three Baltic presidents were returning expatriate English-speakers from North America....two of them conveniently transnational in the run-up to EU membership and the third, although not yet president then, was foreign minister) But that presidential electoral universe doesn't fully overlap with parliamentary politics and certainly isn't fully predictable from the current balance of power there. The recent presidents have NOT been deeply engaged in parliamentary politics or indeed in elective politics more generally as opposed to policy and civil society. President Andrej Kiska (2014-2019) was primarily a businessman and philanthropist who have never held elective office when he ran for president as an independent in 2014 and trounced political heavy-weight and Prime Minister Robert Fico in the second round. Fico's explanation is essentially that his Smer supporters liked him so much as Prime Minister that they didn't vote for him to be president. This probably has some truth to it, and certainly his decision to run caused some head-scratching, precisely because the presidency is not the power center that the parliament and prime ministership is.¹ What may be even more to the point is that Fico only had his own party voters to rely on. (Kevin Deegan-Krause also analyzed the election in detail that I find very useful on his blog, but you will need to scroll down to see the Slovak as opposed to Michigan analysis ! <http://www.pozorblog.com/blog/category/elections/>) It is interesting, by the way, that when Kiska decided not to run for a second term in 2019, one of the reasons that he cited was to "spend more time with his family" –we all know what *that* usually means when a politician withdraws from the race. But in Kiska's case, he looked like the front runner at the time he withdrew.

One could almost say that while midterm elections in the United States are a response to the presidency in office, in Slovakia it can be the other way around, with the presidential election responsive to the assessment of parliament. Environmental lawyer and current President Zuzana Čaputová and her election to office in 2019 is a case in point, both as a previously non-partisan activist without electoral history and as a response to the government in office. Recall that the murder of journalist Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová in 2018 had sparked massive national protests in year prior to the presidential election that led to the ouster of Robert Fico but not his party. And as with Kiska before her, Čaputová handily defeated the government supported candidate in the second round with the general slogan "Stand up to evil" (one

¹ Still, the Slovak presidential power is not negligible; the president ratifies international treaties, appoints and appointing constitutional court judges (in consonance with parliament), holds the office of commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and has veto power over parliamentary legislation.

of the saving graces of Slovak politics is the public counter-mobilization in support of democracy and clean government at critical moments). But notice that although the Progressive Slovakia party that supported her (and that she joined when newly founded in 2018) won two seats in the European Parliamentary elections held two months after her presidential victory, that party failed to win parliamentary representation in 2020.

Just for fun, a cartoon as Kiska passed the baton (er...corruption-clean-up mop and bucket) to Čaputová: <https://dennikn.sk/1428961/shooty-sluzba-vlasti/>



Finally, a few words about the complex universe of regional elections and governance. And it is a complex system to unravel; after all, in the last regional and local elections, Slovakia had eight self-governing regions; 165 members of the regional assemblies, almost 3000 mayors, and more than 20,000 city councilors. In some respects, the pattern of these elections seems less divorced from the presence of the key players in parliamentary politics than the presidential electoral outcomes can be. It takes a much better organized grass roots organization to rack up a broad range of victories and in many areas the capacity to build local electoral coalitions from diverse parties. On the other hand, at the local level, independent candidates have the upper hand; in the 2018 local elections, the big winner, as usual, were the independents, with about 1/3 of the city council positions.

However, like presidential elections, these regional and local contests are quite sensitive to national trends; the most recent 2017 regional elections saw a rise in turnout that has been attributed to just that kind of response, to challenge the Fico dominance of the country (and in Banská Bystrica to oust Marion Kotleba from regional leadership). Kotleba was of course viewed not only as a regional challenge for central Slovakia, but a response to the inadequacies of the current political scene. Just as importantly, they are viewed, as in the case of Germany's lander elections, as a

reflection of the strength of national trends (thus headlines in 2017 such as “Slovakia's ruling party, far-right party lose regional elections”)

As an example of the nationalized characterization of subnational elections, a cartoon from *Trend* that has the headline, “The problem is not Kotleba, but the opposition...”

<https://www.trend.sk/trend-archiv/problem-nie-je-kotleba-ale-opozicia>



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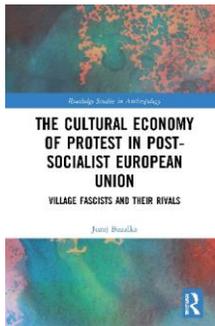
However we view the role of subnational elections in Slovakia, whether as a bellwether or response, it's worth paying attention. Subnational elections are a platform for better local responsiveness, but they were also an early warning for far-right neo-Nazi movement like Kotleba's. The next regional elections are due in 2022.

One difference in the set of political universes in which those elections occur is that Slovak expatriates cannot vote in these local and regional elections, whereas they can vote in European Parliament elections and in national elections. Does that matter? Yes, it should. Especially because of the EU diaspora, more than 200,000 Slovak citizens live in other EU countries and the overall registered Slovak voting population in 2020 was about 4.4 million. That expatriate contingent is more impressive if you consider that expatriate voters from virtually all East European countries are not a partisan random sample; they tend to be more moderate but definitely right of center voters. So their absence in subnational elections has some effects. Moreover, the pressure from expatriate citizens is part of the impetus for the future of e-voting on the Estonian model throughout the EU. (e-voting is now standard at all levels in Estonia, and more than 40% of Estonia voters did so on-line in the last elections).

MEMBER NEWS

Peter Bugge Presentation Peter received the Gratias Agit award from the Czech Foreign Ministry for promoting the good name of the Czech Republic. On that occasion, the English service of Czech Radio interviewed him. The interview (including a print transcript), is available at this link: <https://english.radio.cz/danish-historianpeter-bugge-his-fascination-czechculture-and-memories-velvet-8698990>

Juraj Buzalka's recent book is *The Cultural Economy of Protest in Post-Socialist European Union: Village Fascists and Their Rivals* ([https://www.routledge.com/The-Cultural-Economy-of-Protest-in-Post-Socialist-European-Union-Village-Fascists-and-Their-Rivals](https://www.routledge.com/The-Cultural-Economy-of-Protest-in-Post-Socialist-European-Union-Village-Fascists-and-Their-Rivals/Buzalka/p/book/9780367431518))



Focusing on Slovakia and East Central Europe, this book examines the cultural economy of protest and considers how the origins of political movements – progressive and reactionary – derive from resilient agrarian features. It draws attention to how the legacy of rural socialist modernization influences contemporary politics and to the 'village' version of fascism developing in the region. The chapters look at the interplay of post-peasant economic and political habits and representations as a result of state-socialism and with regard to the European project, as viewed through an ethnographic lens. Juraj Buzalka describes the bulk of Slovak citizens as post-socialist Europeans with a connection to the countryside who feel that this is where real power in society should be defined and based. He also observes the politicians who are skillfully mobilizing post-peasants while exploiting the political-economic context of the European Union.

Kevin Deegan-Krause and Tim Haughton have just published (February 2021) *The New Party Challenge Changing Cycles of Party Birth and Death in Central Europe and Beyond* with Oxford University Press



- Features new tools for mapping and measuring party systems
- Provides the most detailed study of party politics in Central Europe over the past three decades
- Develops a new party subsystem model
- Combines insights from interviews with over 200 party officials from more than 100 countries with data collated and gleaned from several databases

In April 2020 Kevin also participated in a webinar panel “Slovakia: New Government, New Challenges,” under the auspices of Friends of Slovakia. You can access it on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gli0QHGBeWY>

Robert Evanson is co-editor with Robin Alison Remington of the volume *Globalization and Regime Change* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2020), which includes his own chapter on the *long durée* of the Sudeten German controversy and Carol Skalnik Leff’s chapter on Slovak politics.

Helen Fedor reports she retired from the European Division of the Library of Congress at the end of February 2020. When she retired she was the Reference Specialist responsible for Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Slovenia.

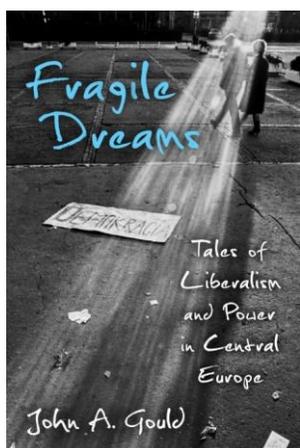
In 2020, the Slovak American Society of Washington DC designated her as the first recipient of the Steve Matula Award. Here is the citation in part:

“Helen Fedor has been a long-time SASW member and has served in a variety of roles (membership chair, vice president, president and program chair). During her time on the board, she helped to revise the by-laws and supported efforts to obtain non-profit status for the society. Helen has been the driving force behind many of the society’s efforts. As the program chair, she has led the Speakers’

series and coordinated many special events, including the annual picnics, Svätý Mikuláš parties, Café Night scholarship fundraisers, conversation groups, and cooking events. Helen's leadership and personal devotion of time, energy, and knowledge have significantly contributed to the success of SASW in fulfilling its mission as a social, cultural, and educational organization.

Editors note: SASW has long worked with the Slovak Embassy in co-sponsoring joint events, and Helen in her SASW capacity was instrumental on more than one occasion in facilitating SSA receptions at the embassy.

John A. Gould has published *Fragile Dreams: Tales of Liberalism and Power in Central Europe* with University of Michigan Press with a heavy emphasis on Czechoslovakia in his case material.



Description from the press: In *Fragile Dreams*, John A. Gould examines Central European communism, why it failed, and what has come since. Moving loosely chronologically from 1989 to the present, each chapter focuses on topics of importance to the fields of comparative politics, sociology, and feminist and gender studies. He addresses literature and key events related to the following: uprisings and social movements; communism and liberalism; the 20th century communist experience; post-communist liberal economic and political reform; politicized identity (with a focus on nation, gender and sexual orientation); democratization and EU accession; homophobia; and finally, populism and democratic decline. He draws heavily from his own research and experience as well as case studies of the former Czechoslovakia, Western Balkans, and Hungary—but much of the analysis has general applicability to the broader postcommunist region.

Frank Henschel Frank, together with Martina Winkler (Eastern European History, U Kiel), Gabriela Dudeková Kováčová (Historický ústav SAV, Bratislava), Jan Randák (Ústav českých dějin - UK Praha) organized the Annual Conference of the Collegium Carolinum taking place from November 7-10 2019 in Fischbachau, Bavaria. The theme was “Childhoods in the Bohemian Lands and Slovakia in the 19th and 20th Century” and they had some 20 presentations and a lively debate about using childhood as an analytical category in historical research of the region or how to find and interpret sources from or about children. The results are currently collected and are being reviewed by the organizers in order to publish an edited volume by the end of the year—as for the recent volumes of Collegium Carolinum editions all in English for an international audience.

Nick Hudac This academic year 2020/2021 at FAMU (Academy of the Performing Arts, Prague), he has been teaching a comparative course on CENTRAL EUROPEAN CINEMAS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE WORLD CINEMA. At ASEEEES, he will be presenting on a Central European gender panel, looking at how Slovak film and visual media in the socialist period "gendered" the Slovak countryside-- it's expanding on an idea that my Czech colleagues (who are also presenting on the panel) Libuše Heczková and Kateřina Svatoňová have discussed in their work on female directors and authors who created their own non-traditionally "female" spaces in Czech pubs in the same period.

Owen Johnson doesn't seem to be really retired. His work in the past year: "Media and Nation in 20th Century Slovakia," research in progress, presented at the annual convention of the American Journalism Historians Association convention, online, October 3.

Items on other historical areas--

"Ernie Pyle & Harriett Davidson: Two Red-Headed Travelers," *Traces of Indiana & Midwestern History* 32:3 (Summer 2020), pp. 46-55

At Home with Ernie Pyle (Indianapolis: IBJ, 2020)--2nd printing: original published in 2016 by Indiana University Press

"'That's All We Did for Him': The Story of Ernie Pyle and His Relationship to Blacks," presented at the annual convention of the American Journalism Historians Association convention, online, October 2

"Ernie Pyle, World War II, and Telling It Like It Is," Journalism History podcast #60, <https://journalism-history.org/2020/09/29/johnson-podcast-ernie-pyle-wwii-and-telling-it-like-it-is/>

Owen also reports that he played the role of a passerby in an episode of “The Ernie Pyle Experiment,” a thirteen-part podcast series: https://indianapublicmedia.org/erniepyle_podcast/episodes.php.

Stanislav J. Kirschbaum, published "Slovakia in the European Union: National Retrenchment or Wider Cooperation?" in Justín Dudáš, Monique Gay-Šmondřková, and Ladislav Vančo, *Liberté et Patrie. Mélanges offerts à Jozef M. Rydlo, membre de l'Institut slovaque*, Bratislava: Post Scriptum, 2021, pp. 349-362.

Michael Kopanic published an article on Milan Rastislav Stefanik in 1914-1918 Online: International Encyclopedia of the First World War https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/stefanik_milan_rastisla_v?_id=1587452463

James Krapfl My big news is that I'm now the editor of *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue canadienne des slavistes*. Everyone who wants to publish their brilliant articles about Slovakia in a peer-reviewed journal should send them to me.

On a belated note, the SSA editor apologizes for not having mentioned in an earlier newsletter that James co-edited a special issue of *East European Politics & Societies and Cultures* to mark the fortieth anniversary of Václav Havel's landmark essay *The Power of the Powerless*. For his work on this collection, Prof. Krapfl received the Michael Henry Heim Prize in collegial translation.

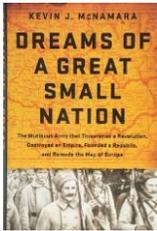
Recent publications by **Mark Lauersdorf** include:

- "Historical (Standard) Language Development and the Writing of Historical Identities: A Plaidoyer for a Data-Driven Approach to the Investigation of the Sociolinguistic History of (Not Only) Slovak", in: *V zeleni drželi zeleni breg: Studies in Honor of Marc L. Greenberg*, Stephen M. Dickey and Mark Richard Lauersdorf, eds. Bloomington, Indiana: Slavica Publishers, 2018 (appeared 2019): 199-218.

Mark was recently Visiting Professor in the Department of English and American Studies at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, during Summer Semester 2020 (February -May 2020).

Carol Skalnik Leff. Co-authored with Sabrina Ramet. 2020. Interwar Czechoslovakia – a national state for a multiethnic population *Interwar East Central Europe, 1918-1941: The Failure of Democracy-Building, the Fate of Minorities* (London: Routledge) 75-108.

Kevin J McNamara's narrative history of the founding of Czecho-Slovakia in 1918 amidst the political drama and combat of World War One and the Russian Revolution, *Dreams of a Great Small Nation: the Mutinous Army that Threatened a Revolution, Destroyed an Empire, Founded a Republic, and Remade the Map of Europe* (New York: Public Affairs) has just been translated into both Czech and Slovak editions and published by Slovart Publishing Ltd., which has offices in both Prague and Bratislava.



Simultaneously, he was interviewed by Česká Televise & CNN-Czech Republic today, November 11th, about the translations. The Česká Televise interview was broadcast November 12 2020. The CNN interview, aired the same day. The book was also the subject of a two-part interview on *Radio Prague*, and it was excerpted in three American periodicals (*Russian Life*, *Military History Quarterly*, and *Slovo*) and a Slovak journal of history, *Historická Revue*. See also earlier *Radio Prague* interview <https://english.radio.cz/us-author-highlights-legionnaires-role-founding-czechoslovakia-part-2-8223256>

Czech title: *Velký Sen: Dvou Malých Národů. Československé legie v Rusku a vznik první republiky.* **Slovak:** title: *Veľký Sen: Dvoch Malých Národov. Česko-slovenské légie v Rusku a vznik prvej republiky.*

It was also the subject of a two-part interview on *Radio Prague*, and it was excerpted in three American periodicals (*Russian Life*, *Military History Quarterly*, and *Slovo*) and a Slovak journal of history, *Historická Revue*.

He also contributed a forward, "A Slovak Unbound: The Global Impact of Štefánik's Brief Life," to the forthcoming English translation of a biography, Milan Rastislav Štefánik: A Man of Iron Will (*Prebijem sa! Štefánik. Muž železnej vole*), by Jozef Banáš, translated by James Sutherland-Smith (New York, NY, and Bratislava, SK: Hybrid Global Publishing & Global Slovakia, 2020)

Marty Manor Mullins Marty's article, "Forgotten Velvet: Understanding Eastern Slovakia's 1989," appeared in the journal *New Perspectives: Interdisciplinary Journal of Central and East European Politics and International Relations*, vol. 27, no. 3, (Winter 2019): 63-100. By focusing on the experience of Eastern Slovakia during Czechoslovakia's 1989 Velvet Revolution, this article examines the motivations propelling local revolutionaries who opposed the Communist regime at great risk to themselves and their families. It asks what inspired those who countered the government 30 years ago and argues that, for many, ideological factors were the primary driver, rather than economic considerations. Free Download available at this link: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2336825X1902700304#>

Virginia Paroubek is a regular contributor to *Slovakia Magazine*, a publication of the Slovak Heritage and Folklore Society International which focuses on history culture, customs and genealogy. <http://helenezx.homestead.com/slovakia.html>. Here are some her recent articles:

Field Code Changed

The gradual blossoming of my Slavic life, part 1 of 4. *Slovakia Magazine*. Spring 2019.

The gradual blossoming of my Slavic life, part 2 of 4. *Slovakia Magazine*. Summer 2019.

The gradual blossoming of my Slavic life, part 3 of 4. *Slovakia Magazine*. Fall 2019.

"Shadows of forgotten ancestors." Ukrainian film review for *Slovakia Magazine*. Spring 2019.

The gradual blossoming of my Slavic life, part 4 of 4. *Slovakia Magazine*. Winter 2020.

That special weekend in Detva: July 2000. *Slovakia Magazine*. Summer 2020.

Slovak Treasures Tour 2000: Part 2. *Slovakia Magazine*. Fall 2020.

Virtuoso: a novel by Yelena Moskvich. *World Literature Today*. Summer 2020. (book review)

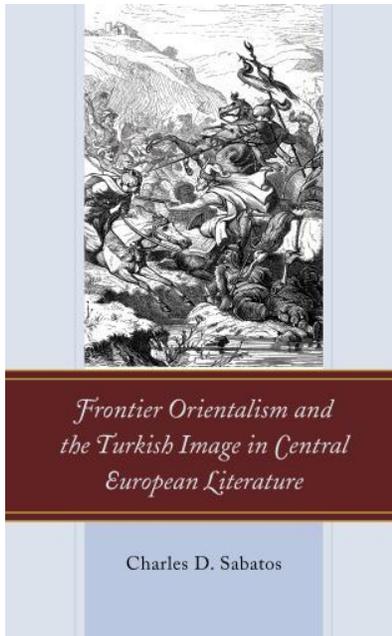
Slovakia: The legend and the linden. Z. Pavlovic and Gabriela

Bereghazyova. *Slovakia Magazine*. Winter 2020. (book review)

From Porac to Pennsylvania: reflections of Maria Durica Sirila Dursa by Sharon Z. Fuller. *Slovakia Magazine*. Summer 2020. (book review)

Edward Snajdr is a professor of anthropology at John Jay College, City University of New York. He studies social justice movements, conflict, violence, policing, and gender in East Europe, Central Asia, and the U.S. His most recent book, co-authored with John Jay College sociolinguist Shonna Trinch, is *What the Signs Say: Language, Gentrification, and Place-making in Brooklyn* (2020 Vanderbilt University Press).

Charles Sabatos has published his new book *Frontier Orientalism and the Turkish Image in Central European Literature*. (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2020.)
<https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781793614872/Frontier-Orientalism-and-the-Turkish-Image-in-Central-European-Literature>



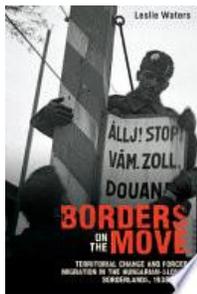
He also announces the recent publication of the following articles:

1. "Studne lásky a srdcia kamenné: dve storočia trenčianskej legendy v slovenskej literatúre." https://www.sav.sk/index.php?lang=sk&doc=journal-list&part=article_response_page&journal_article_no=21371
Slovenská literatúra, Vol. 67, No. 4, 2020.
2. "Finding a Voice: the Slovak-Roma Woman Writer in Irish and Czech Fiction."
Romani Studies, Vol. 30, No. 2,
2020. <https://www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/journals/article/60272/>

M. Mark Stolarik, as University of Ottawa's Chair in Slovak History and Culture, has been engaged in helping to organize an exhibition on the life and significance of General Milan R. Štefánik, a project that had to be postponed from 2020 because of the Covid pandemic. He was also invited to write a chapter on "Slovaks abroad help their Roman Catholic brethren in the homeland in the 20th century" for a forthcoming handbook on 20th religion in Slovakia, a project under the auspices of Collegium

Carolinum in Munich, with Martin Schulze-Wessel and Martin Zuchert serving as lead editors.

Leslie Waters has just published *Borders on the Move: Territorial Change and Ethnic Cleansing in the Hungarian-Slovak Borderlands, 1938-1948* (University of Rochester Press, 2020)



Under the sponsorship of the Hungarian Studies Association, she will be talking about the book with discussion by Rebecca Klein-Pejsova on June 16. The talk is accessible through Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/events/978145296283556/>

SHARON WOLCHIK organized a panel for the 2020 virtual ASEES convention in November. Panelists and SSA members who participated were Tim Haughton (University of Birmingham UK) Kevin Deegan-Krause (Wayne State) Karen Henderson (University of Sts Cyril and Methodius, Slovakia), and Carol Skalnik Leff (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign). They discussed the lessons of the 2020 Slovak elections about the role of corruption and political campaigning and also examined post-election shifts in party relations in both the government and opposition, the role of President Zuzana Čaputová, the influence of extremist and anti-system parties, and the Hungarian parties' position in the current Slovak political scene. Moderated by Scott Thayer, Chair of Friends of Slovakia.

Follow our SSA Facebook Page:

It's active and interesting

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/slovakstudies>

With particular thanks to regular contributors like Michael Kopanic. As an example, I am copying a feature from Facebook introducing the work in a new member profile.

DENISA NEŠŤÁKOVÁ



Denisa is a Research Associate at the Herder Institute in Marburg, Germany and a History faculty member at Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia Email: denisa.nestakova@gmail.com

Her work focuses on gender issues relating to Czech and Slovak history

When/how did you first develop an interest in Slovak or Slovak-area studies? As a Slovak and a historian who lived, studied, and worked in Slovakia, I was not particularly interested in Slovakia or Slovak-area studies until I moved abroad and understood how much this field of study is under-researched, and thus misunderstood. Wanting to correct the marginalization of the history of Slovakia and to situate it within the broader history of "the East" thus definitely triggered my interest.

What is your current research/work project? I am currently working on two projects:

- The first examines the social history of Czechoslovakia with a focus on Slovakia within a broader project entitled ["Family planning' in East Central Europe from the 19th century until the approval of the 'pill'."](#)
- The second investigates [the impact of gender within the society of Jewish inmates in the Sered' camp](#), which functioned as a concentration and labor camp in Slovakia between 1941 and 1945.

Please say a few words about any activities or projects you're involved in that link academia with society at large.

I wish to combine quality academic research with the popularization of historical knowledge. Thus, I take part in seminars for teachers comparing the regimes of Tiso and Horthy (along with my Hungarian colleague Borbála Klacsmann), and we discuss sexual violence during the Second World War.

Currently I am also part of a university seminar on Fascism and Neo-Fascism in a comparative perspective, where I give a lecture on Fascism and gendered violence. My recent article on clandestine abortions during the existence of the wartime Slovak Republic expounds on this theme: "*Žena proti štátu. 'Kriminálne' potraty v čase Slovenskej republiky 1939-1945*" ("Woman against the State: 'Criminal' abortions in the Slovak Republic, 1939-1945"). It was published along with a current best-selling book on the Slovak market titled *Tisovi poza chrbát (Behind Tiso's Back)*, edited by Jozef Hyrja.

Lately I also took the opportunity to talk about my research on podcasts. Along with Andrea Pető from Central European University [I discussed the Sered' Holocaust Museum](#), which opened in Slovakia in 2016.

As a guest of the podcast "*V ženskom rode*" [I gave a glimpse into the history of attacks](#) against women's sexual and reproductive health and rights and historical parallels with the current political and ideological discussions in Slovakia.

ASEEES 2021 CONVENTION AND SOME NOSTALGIA FROM A PRIOR NOLA CONVENTION

The upcoming annual meeting of the Association of Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies is a hybrid, part held in New Orleans (conditions allowing) and part online slightly later:

November 18-21, 2021 in New Orleans, LA
Hilton New Orleans Riverside

December 2-3, 2021 for the Virtual Convention

I have registered, and note that the registration fees vary only 20 dollars to attend both.

The Slovak Studies Association sponsored panel will be held in person; as organizer of this panel, if any panelists can't come in person, I will work on a zoom access. I am contacting the convention organizers to see if this hybrid possibility will be standard in any case.

The last time the Slavic Association met in New Orleans was the year after Hurricane Katrina. ASEEES was still AAASS (easier to remember/say as triple A double S but not inclusive of all areas of study). Maybe it was the disarray of the post-Katrina chaos, but the Marriott that hosted AAASS made a simple mistake that some of us present appreciated as we enjoyed our drinks. Read their convention welcome tous!



Slovak Studies Association Dues Structure

Graduate students and first-year members (no charge)

Just send your contact information for the membership list and any new member information to Carol Skalnik Leff, leffc@illinois.edu

Junior faculty, retirees, and equivalents

1 year: \$10

2 years: \$15 (\$7.50 per year)

5 years: \$30 (\$6 per year)

Senior faculty and equivalents

1 year: \$20

2 years: \$30 (\$15 per year)

5 years: \$60 (\$12 per year)

Life Time Membership: \$200

You may mail payments to the treasurer, Carol Leff, 604 W Washington St. Urbana IL 61801

But it is simpler to pay dues on line through our new website

<https://slovakstudies.org/membership/>

Please pay for 2021 and later soon, because we will be updating our membership list.

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Newsletter Editor as of June 2021, the newsletter editor is Mark Stolarik.

Please send news items for the next newsletter to him at stolarik@uottawa.ca.

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